

## Part III

### Premieres, 1927-2000

Nov. 15, 1927: Cecil Burleigh, *Evangeline, Tone Poem after Longfellow* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor]

Burleigh was on the faculty at the University, and certainly the most widely-known Madison composer of this period. *Evangeline* was apparently quite a success at its first performance—it was repeated “by popular demand” at a subsequent Civic Symphony concert.

May 20, 1931: Laurence Powell, *Keltic Legend* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor]

Powell, a Music Theory teacher at the University, wrote this work between 1923 and 1930. The score is dedicated to Dr. Prager.

February 22, 1932: Sybil Anne Hanks, *Our Washington* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor, Madison Civic Chorus]

Sybil Hanks was a Madison-based composer who had several of her works performed by the Civic Symphony and Chorus during the 1930s and 1940s—most notably the large patriotic choral works *Decoration Day Hymn* and *Our Washington*. She was a composition student of Dr. Prager, and in fact did in the late 1960s while visiting the Pragers at their retirement home in Argentina. This is the first of five of her premieres presented by the Madison Civic Symphony and/or chorus. *Our Washington* was the centerpiece of a large civic celebration of the bicentennial of George Washington’s birth. It was repeated the next day on the MCMA’s regular subscription program.

May 3, 1932: Alexius Baas, *How Fair, How Pure Thy World* [Alexius Baas, conductor; Dorothy Laeser Welch, soprano; Madison Civic Chorus; massed choirs (local organizations participating in this Madison Civic Music Festival)]

Baas was a local music teacher, singer, and conductor (he conducted the venerable Madison Männerchor, and performed with the Grieg Chorus). A close associate of Dr. Prager, Baas was associated with Civic Music from the beginning, and was the bass soloist at dozens of concerts from the 1920s through the 1940s. This is only one of several of his choral compositions that were performed at concerts in this period.

October 16, 1932: Sigfrid Prager, *The Message of Song* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus; Dane County Civic Chorus]

Text by John Mael. This work was written for the inauguration of the Dane County Music Festival, and was dedicated to Dane County Civic Chorus.

April 25, 1933: Sigfrid Prager, *Symphonic Suite, Op.17* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus]

Prager completed this four-movement suite in 1929, and the first two movements were played on a February 1930 program—this was the premiere of the complete suite. The third movement featured a backstage chorus, directed by Alexius Baas.

May 1, 1934: Sybil Anne Hanks, *Meditation* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor]

Nov. 29, 1942: Percy Grainger, *The Lads of Wamphray* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus; Karl Fischer-Nieman, tenor; Alexius Baas, bass; Marshall Strauss, bass; Jonathon Pugh, bass; Mozart Club]

Many of Grainger's works, including this one, survive in multiple versions. This was the first performance of this version for soloists, chorus, and orchestra.

February, 21, 1942: Sybil Anne Hanks, *Concertino in E-flat Major for Three Saxophones and Orchestra* (world premiere) [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor; Robert Woollen, Josephine Barbato, and Richard Church, saxophones]

In a later performance note, Hanks said that her intent in this piece was to "show the beauty of the saxophone as a legitimate instrument, rather than just as a medium for jazz,"

May 7, 1944: Oskar Hagen, *Choral Rhapsody in the Romantic Style* [Dr. Sigfrid Prager, conductor; Madison Symphony Chorus; Frances Prager, soprano; Elizabeth Hunter, alto; Samuel Freeman, tenor; Alexius Baas, bass]

Hagen, an Art History Professor at the University, had a long and close relationship with Civic Music. This work was inspired by Civic Music performance of Honegger's *King David* in 1943, and is dedicated to Dr. Prager. Later, in 1950, the Civic Symphony gave the first American performance of Hagen's *Concerto Grosso*.

March 11, 1953: Sybil Anne Hanks, *Quiet my Heart* [Walter Heermann, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus]

Text by Joseph W. Cochran.

April 29, 1955: Sybil Anne Hanks, *The Creation* (finale) [Walter Heermann, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus]

Text by James Weldon Johnson (one of the founding members of the NAACP).

November 27, 1962: Gunther Schuller, *Fanfare for Brass Instruments* [Gunther Schuller, conductor; MSO brass section]

Commissioned by and dedicated to Roland Johnson. The Civic Symphony gave early performances of several Schuller works in the 1960s—a relationship based on a longstanding friendship between Maestro Johnson and the composer. This is the first of three Schuller premieres presented by the orchestra.

December 1, 1965: Franz Schubert, *Fantasy for Violin and Piano* (arranged for orchestra by René Leibowitz) [Roland Johnson, conductor; Rudolf Kolisch, violin]

World premiere of Leibowitz's orchestration.

October 14, 1967: Gunther Schuller, *Vertige d'Eros* [Roland Johnson, conductor]

A relatively early work by Schuller, written nearly 20 years earlier, that had never been performed.

March 22, 1969: Robert Crane, *Exsequiarum Ordo: In Memoriam Berlioz* [Roland Johnson, conductor]

This is the first of three works that Crane—a Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the University—wrote for the MSO in the 1960s and 1970s.

November 22, 1969: Lee Hoiby, *The Tides of Sleep* [Roland Johnson, conductor; John Reardon, baritone]

This Wisconsin-born composer and pianist had studied earlier at the University, and maintained connections in Madison. This is the first of two Hoiby works premiered by the MSO.

January 26, 1974: Alec Wilder, *Concerto for Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra* [Roland Johnson, conductor; Glenn Bowen, clarinet]

May 20, 1975: Robert Crane, *Cino* [Roland Johnson, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus]

September 27, 1975: Hoiby, Lee, *Music for a Celebration* [Roland Johnson, conductor]  
Commissioned for the MSO.

October 18, 1975: Stephen Chatman, *3 A.M. on Capitol Square* [Roland Johnson, conductor]  
Commissioned for the Civic Symphony. Chatman, a composer who grew up in Madison, was a student piano soloist with the orchestra in 1967, and had played for a time in the orchestra's percussion section. He composed two works for the orchestra during the 1970s

December 13, 1975: Robert Crane, *Fanfare for Christmas* [Roland Johnson, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus; David Hottman, narrator; Madison Boychoir]  
Commissioned for the MSO and Madison Civic Chorus.

November 18, 1978: Stephen Chatman, *Occasions* [Roland Johnson, conductor]

May 23, 1981: Gunnar Johansen, *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* [Roland Johnson, conductor; Gunnar Johansen, piano]  
The world-renowned pianist Gunnar Johansen taught at the University. He was a frequent soloist at Civic Symphony concerts, appearing some thirteen times beginning in 1945. This premiere marked his final performance as a soloist with the orchestra.

October 23, 1982: John Harbison, *Overture: Michael Kohlhaas* [Roland Johnson, conductor]  
Harbison resides near Token Creek. The orchestra and chorus have presented four of his works over the years, including an early performance of his *Violin Concerto* that appeared on this same program.

September 18, 1986: Crawford Gates, *Lake Songs* [Roland Johnson, conductor]  
Commissioned for the MSO and performed at Warner Park, as part of the Festival of the Lakes. Gates, a Wisconsin-based composer, and longtime conductor of the Beloit-Janesville Symphony, based this work on the names of Madison's lakes.

February 21, 1987: Michael Torke, *Verdant Music* [Roland Johnson, conductor]  
Joint commission and premiere with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

February 20, 1988: Gunther Schuller, *Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra* [Gunther Schuller, conductor; Pro Arte Quartet]

December 4, 1993: Daron Aric Hagen, *Joyful Music* [Roland Johnson, conductor; Madison Civic Chorus; Kitt Reuter-Foss, mezzo-soprano]  
Daron Hagen (no relationship to Oskar) is a Milwaukee-born composer who maintained a close relationship with Civic Music and the Madison Symphony Orchestra all through the 1990s. Several of his works were programmed, most prominently the premiere of his opera *Shining Brow* by the Madison Opera in 1992. This is the first of three Hagen premieres.

September 23, 1995: Daron Aric Hagen, *Taliesin: Choruses from "Shining Brow"* [John DeMain, conductor; Madison Symphony Chorus]

December 2, 1995: J. Fred Coots, *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town* (arranged by Kirby Shaw and Frank Mantooth) [John DeMain, conductor; Madison Boychoir]

World premiere of this Jazz-style arrangement (primarily by Mantooth) of a Christmas standard. Mantooth later reworked the piece to include a part for the full Madison Symphony Chorus.

February 22, 1997: Wallace, *Kaddish for Harvey Milk* [John DeMain, conductor; Madison Symphony Chorus; Jill Grove, mezzo-soprano; Randall Wong, countertenor; Kurt Ollmann, baritone]

Commissioned for the MSO. This work was derived from Wallace's critically-acclaimed 1995 opera *Harvey Milk*.

January 31, 1998: David DiChiera, *Four Sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay, for Soprano and Orchestra* [John DeMain, conductor; Helen Donath, soprano]

Commissioned for the MSO. World premiere of the orchestral version.

May 29, 1998: Daron Aric Hagen, *Forward!* [Daron Aric Hagen, conductor; MSO brass section]

Commissioned to celebrate the unveiling of the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial postage stamp.

September 19, 1998: Michael Torke, *Jasper* [John DeMain, conductor]

Joint commission and premiere with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, in celebration of the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial.

December 5, 1998: Taras Nahirniak, *Hodie Christus* [John DeMain, conductor; Madison Boychoir]

Joint premiere with the Madison Boychoir.

August 8, 1999: Arthur Weisberg, *Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon, and Strings* [John DeMain, conductor; John Dee, oboe; Arthur Weisberg, bassoon]

Presented at the final concert of a conference of the International Double Reed Society in Madison.

September 23, 2000: John Stevens, *Jubilare!* [Roland Johnson, conductor]

Commissioned to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the MSO.